

# *The National Programme* **on Ageing Workers**

*Evaluation*

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*Robert Arnkil, Merja Hietikko, Kati Mattila, Jarmo Nieminen,  
Pekka Rissanen, Timo Spangar*

# *The National Programme*

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## **on Ageing Workers**

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## *Summary*

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The report deals with the results of the National Programme on Ageing Workers, gathered from its central target areas. The report does not describe the implementation and administration of the programme. Concerning the implementation, such aspects as co-operation, networking and learning structures were evaluated. The evaluation is included in the summary presented in chapter five of the report.

The external evaluation of the Programme on Ageing Workers was carried out by Social Development Co Ltd. The evaluation is based on the follow-up material and evaluation material produced by the programme, as well as special interviews and observations made by the evaluator about the developments of the programme. Additionally, the material collected in connection with the international peer review was utilised.

**Key words:** ageing, ageing workers, early retirements, employment, the National Programme on Ageing Workers, unemployment, working capacity, working conditions.



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## 1. *The ‘age problem’*

The ‘age problem’, which is ultimately the reason that the National Programme on Ageing Workers was set up, consists of two main distinct issues. On the one hand, there is the cost to society of premature retirement, and on the other hand, the ensuing shortage of labour. Both of these problems can be solved by the same expedient, i.e. by encouraging people to retire later, closer to the official retirement age, but this requires that we look after the working capacity of our ageing workers and ensure that they can keep up with the new skills demands which emerge as the labour market develops.

The importance of ensuring ageing workers’ wellbeing at work and helping them stay in work was thrown into sharp relief by a recent forecast, according to which people will be retiring from working life in such numbers over the next few years that the new annual cohorts entering the labour market will not be able to replace them all (*Työvoiman saatavuus-projekti* (a project on future labour supply) 2001).

## 2. *The National Programme on Ageing Workers*

The National Programme on Ageing Workers originated in the work of a committee which was appointed to investigate how the work input of ageing workers could best be used to benefit working life. The committee submitted its final report at the end of 1996, proposing a National Programme on Ageing Workers. Based on the committee’s proposal, the Government decided in 1997 on the actions needed for the improvement of ageing workers’ employment situation (40 actions), and this is the foundation of the National Programme on Ageing Workers.

The Programme period is 1998-2002, and the programme consists of 40 actions set down in a Government Resolution. These comprise an extensive information and training programme for various target groups (occupational health care staff, regional occupational safety authorities and labour administration staff, workplace communities, individuals), with the aim of encouraging workplace health promotion (WHP) to maintain the working capacity of ageing workers, and of increasing awareness about issues related to ageing. In addition to these, the programme comprises practical workplace health promotion work and research on employment issues related to ageing workers, strives to focus attention on ageing workers in general, make services for ageing workers more effective in the employment services, occupational safety and adult education, and promotes the development of workplace communities.



The Programme also includes studies on certain legislative topics (the position of ageing workers in relation to redundancy or termination of employment, reform of the financial support system for adult education, the question of the insured's own risk in disability and unemployment pensions, gradation of employment pension contributions according to age, and removal of social security contributions unconnected with work).

When the decision was taken to launch the programme, the following legislative amendments were also decided on:

- A new paragraph will be added to the Act on Codetermination in Companies: "Personnel and training plans should seek to devote attention to the special needs of ageing workers and officials".
- Amendments were made to the Occupational Safety Act; one of the amendments added ageing to the list of issues that employers must take into account in addition to age, gender, vocational skill, etc., while the other added workplace health promotion to the programme that employers are required to have for the promotion of safety and health in the workplace.

During the programme period of the National Programme on Ageing Workers, a new Occupational Health Care Act entered into force (as of the beginning of 2002).

The primary target group of the programme consists of employed and unemployed people aged 45-64, for whom the programme provides actions which promote work ability, employment and employment potential, actions which help put off retirement, and research, training and information. Other target groups include occupational health care and occupational safety staff, labour administration staff, education administration staff, employers and workplace communities, for whom the programme provides research, training and information. Finally, the general public is also a target group of information campaigns on ageing.

The programme is funded from the Budget, and a total of FIM 25 million has been earmarked for it for the five-year programme period.

The main implementing body responsible for the programme is the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, while the other responsible implementers are the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Education. The responsibility for implementing the 40 programmes within the National Programme on Ageing Workers is divided among these ministries.

The programme has an advisory board consisting of representatives of the ministries already mentioned, as well as representatives of the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Trade and Industry, the labour market organizations, the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, the Institute of Occupational Health, the Social Insurance Institution (KELA), the Federation of Employment Pension Institutions, the Federation of Finnish Enterprises and the Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners.

The programme is a major cooperation project comprising a number of objectives, actions, target groups and levels. It is a very comprehensive programme, implemented through legislation, research and development projects, training and communication. The distribution of emphasis between these different channels has varied during the programme period. To begin with, legislative amendments were made and information on the programme was disseminated. In the middle of the programme period (1999-2000), the focus was on research and development projects. The end of the programme period (2000-2001) has focused on training to maintain the work ability of management and employees (*Kansallinen Ikäohjelma 1998-2002, Väliraportti 3* (National Programme on Ageing Workers, 1998-2002, interim report 3; Finnish only).

### ***3. Monitoring and evaluation of the programme***

The National Programme on Ageing Workers has its own complex monitoring and evaluation system, and an expert group was appointed to monitor implementation of the programme. The main focuses of monitoring are: how well ageing workers are able to stay on in working life (employment rate), the unemployment rate of ageing workers, ageing workers' tendency to take early retirement (calculated retirement age), and trends in the targets areas (such as improvement of work ability and vocational skills) and actions (such as workplace health promotion) promoted by the programme. Monitoring reports have been published annually (1999, 2000 and 2001).

The programme has created a 'WHP barometer', which also serves as a monitoring tool. The barometer for 1998 has been published (*Tyky-barometri 1999*; Finnish only). The next barometer was prepared in 2001 and will be published in 2002.

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health is drawing up a monitoring report on the implementation of the programme as a whole. The ministries in charge of the programme monitor the implementation of projects within their sphere of responsibility, and results have been published in reports from the Ministry of Social

Affairs and Health, the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Education.

### *External evaluation*

As the National Programme on Ageing Workers (1998-2002) is coming to an end, the time has come to produce a summary of the evaluation of its results. This has been drawn up by a team of assessors at Social Development Co Ltd, and the results of the assessment are given in this report.

The evaluation is based on monitoring and evaluation material produced by the programme itself, and on supplementary material collected by the assessors, which consists of interviews with key actors (a total of 9 appointments for interviews/discussion), observation of the events of the programme (two events) and a survey of local and regional experts (labour administration, occupational safety authorities, occupational health care staff, development projects, and personnel management at companies, municipalities and joint municipal boards). The target group for the survey was selected as a stratified random sample, and a questionnaire was then sent to a total of 320 experts. This yielded 173 replies, a response rate of 54%.

Material compiled in connection with the international peer review of the programme was also used (the assessor acted as independent national expert).

This report focuses on the results achieved in the main target areas of the programme. Description of the implementation and administration of the programme has been excluded from the report, but in respect of implementation, the cooperation, networking and learning structures of the programme are assessed in the summary presented in section five.

### *International Peer Review*

The Commission initiated a Peer Review programme in support of the European Employment Strategy in 1999. The purpose of the programme is to promote shared learning and the identification and sharing of good practices. Each Peer Review meeting is hosted by a Member State, which presents a national programme representing a best practice. Representatives of the authorities in Member States interested in the programme in question take part in the meeting, together with independent experts and a representative of the Commission.

Finland's National Programme on Ageing Workers was evaluated at a Peer Review meeting held in Helsinki on October 12-13, 2001. In addition to Finland, representatives from the Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, Austria, France, Sweden, Germany and the UK attended the meeting.

The implementation and results of the National Programme on Ageing Workers were presented by representatives of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Education. Representatives of the labour market organizations presented their own views and actions in relation to the programme.

Representatives of the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health presented two of the achievements of the programme, the *Porkkana* project and the WHP barometer. There was also a visit to the head office of UPM-Kymmene Oyj for a presentation on the company's age strategy.

Although the situation varies a great deal among Member States, all are facing challenges related to the ageing of the population and the employment problems of ageing workers, and the experiences of other countries in this area can be very useful. Finland is among the countries where these problems have emerged on a wide front at a relatively early stage. The representatives of other Member States who took part in the Peer Review considered the results and experiences from Finland's National Programme on Ageing Workers to be interesting for their own countries. Actions and programmes similar to the Finnish programme have been implemented in some other countries, too, but few have been as comprehensive on a national scale.

Generally speaking, the representatives of the other Member States felt that the multifaceted approach of the National Programme on Ageing Workers was interesting and beneficial, in that it comprises a number of different actions (including preventive action), efforts to foster awareness on a wide front, and cooperation between different authorities (including three ministries) in the implementation of the programme. The wide consensus among policy-makers in Finland on the importance of helping ageing workers stay in work, and the strong role taken by occupational health care in development action were mentioned among Finland's strengths in the Peer Review discussions.

## 4. Results of the programme

### 4.1 Did the programme get its message across?

Work to raise awareness and influence public attitudes was a main focus throughout the programme. About half of the programme's total funding (FIM 25 million) was channelled into information and communications in 1997-2001 (*Kansallinen Ikäohjelma 1998-2002, Väliraportti 3* (National Programme on Ageing Workers, 1998-2002, interim report 3; Finnish only).

The 'message' of the programme was spread in many different ways and the success in getting it across was monitored. Supplementary material collected in connection with the programme's own monitoring and evaluation work suggests that the National Programme on Ageing Workers was in fact successful in getting its message across.

A study made in connection with an outdoor advertising campaign suggests that about half of city-dwellers (in the biggest Finnish cities) know the National Programme on Ageing Workers at least by name. Most of the 'senior' age group (50+) know the programme by name, and one in five has found out more about it. Between half and two thirds of respondents felt the programme was necessary and useful to at least some extent (i.e. beneficial, interesting, and helped promote wellbeing at work and employment levels). Seniors had a better-than-average image of the programme (Survey by I.R.O. Research Oy in spring 2001).

Is the National Programme on Ageing Workers known in the workplace? The 2001 WHP barometer also measured the visibility and impact of the programme. The results of the barometer have yet to be published, but preliminary information suggests that it will support the opinion we have formed in connection with our assessment, i.e. that while many (or even most) people have heard about the National Programme on Ageing Workers, it remains rather unfamiliar to them. There is, however, a significant minority of about 10-20 per cent who have first-hand experience of the programme.

The information provision of the programme has been directed especially to employers, who have been given information on the strengths of ageing workers and ways of helping them stay in work. According to follow-up research on the information campaigns targeted at employers, the message of the programme was well received (Forsman & Liukkunen 1999, Pertti Linkola's statement of October 5, 2001).

A fairly wide spectrum of Finnish policy-makers, experts and researchers has been aware of the programme right from the outset and taken part in it on the national level. The programme has also comprised a training network since 1999. Though originating ‘from on high’, the programme has reached the grassroots to some extent (workplaces, civic forums), but it has especially clearly reached levels close to the grassroots which afford a good overview of the field. This is shown by the survey<sup>1</sup> of local and regional experts in the labour administration, occupational safety and health care, and adult education which was conducted in connection with the assessment.

Out of all the respondents to the survey (n=173), 6% heard about the National Programme on Ageing Workers for the first time, 56% said the programme was familiar although they had not been involved with it and 38% said they had been involved in projects or actions which were part of the programme or aligned with it. The respondents had either formed a neutral, businesslike image (54%) of the message of the programme, or a positive, encouraging image (44%). Only 2% said they felt the image was negative and coercive.

We asked the local and regional-level experts to assess the change, if any, in some of the key focus areas of the National Programme on Ageing Workers over the last five years (see appendix 2). According to respondents, the biggest change for the better had taken place in the availability of information on ageing and on the situation of ageing people in working life.<sup>2</sup> 76% of respondents felt access to information had improved at least to some extent, and 16% said there had been a noticeable improvement in access to information.

The Institute of Occupational Health has been preparing a portal for issues concerning ageing and maintaining working capacity; the portal will make information on these issues available to everyone in a form which is immediately useful in practical service and development work.

## 4.2 *Have attitudes changed?*

The National Programme on Ageing Workers has disseminated information very widely and the message has usually been well received. There is also reason to believe that attitudes to ageing people (as employees) have changed at least to

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<sup>1</sup> A survey of experts in specific fields conducted by Social Development Co Ltd in 2001. The respondents included people in charge of the human resources of cities, joint municipal boards and businesses.

<sup>2</sup> People felt improved access was important, but not as important as it was to make progress towards the other targets listed (see appendix 2).

some extent in a positive direction. It is impossible to say precisely how much this change has been influenced by the increased demand for labour (including ageing workers) on the programme. It is probably safe to say, however, that the message of the programme, which is not merely an advertising campaign, but an information and training programme based on solid research, has contributed significantly to the change for the better.

Responses to the survey confirmed that attitudes had changed. A clear majority (59%) felt that the general attitude to ageing workers had changed for the better during the past five years. About half estimated no change when it came to taking ageing people into account in the organization of work and in management practices. Nevertheless, there were more people saying there had been a change for the better (38%) than saying there had been a change for the worse (14%). (See appendix 2)

Thus there is reason to believe that there has been a change for the better in the general attitude towards ageing people. This change, described in positive terms by a majority of respondents, does not necessarily mean that things are now all right in the workplace, however. About two in five respondents over the age of 45 in a survey by Juuti (2001) felt that ageist attitudes existed in their workplace community. The attitudes were based on negative attributes linked with ageing, such as a deteriorating capacity for learning, and the general lack of respect for ageing people in the workplace. Ageing women were more likely to feel that there was ageism present in their workplace and that there was a lack of respect for ageing workers (*ibid.*). There are also other research results that suggest that women may be more exposed to negative attitudes to ageing and to actual ageism than men in Finnish working life (Ilmarinen 1999, *Työolobarometri 2001* (Advance information on the Ministry of Labour's working life barometer)).

A generally positive attitude to ageing people or the fact that they are shown respect in the workplace does not necessarily mean that the workplace in question is prepared to actually recruit more ageing workers as new employees. International research has shown that ageing workers account for a significantly lower percentage of new recruits than their percentage of employed people as a whole.

An OECD study shows that the percentage of people in the 45-64 age group out of new recruits corresponds to only 25-50% of their percentage of the workforce as a whole. Meanwhile, the corresponding figure for young people (under 25) is more than twice their percentage of the workforce as a whole (Walker 1999). Studies in Sweden (Sundström et al. 2001) have shown that the management of many



organizations have a very positive attitude to older workers.<sup>3</sup> They are considered in many ways to be valuable employees, but, despite this, corporate management is not prepared to recruit them to the same extent as younger employees.

Although ageing people's situation in terms of finding work remains difficult, there is some hope of improvement if we can assume continued growth in labour demand (although admittedly the immediate future looks uncertain). For instance, towards the end of the last structural fund period (1995-1999), there was an increase in projects targeted at the ageing unemployed (partly as a result of the National Programme on Ageing Workers), and they produced some favourable experiences, even of ageing unemployed people finding work on the open labour market.

“Employees over 50 have been a positive experience for us. They are very good employees. The rest of our staff is very young and it was therefore good for us to get some slightly older people to work here through the project”. This was how one of the entrepreneurs interviewed described the importance of the project for his company. A representative of the management of another company said the ESF project in support of work for ageing people had started at just the right time, “because where else could we have found anyone to recruit”. (Arnkil et al. 2000).

What happens next? Will we see a situation where ageing workers (including those currently unemployed) will begin to be recruited and even wooed by employers for new vacancies? Perhaps we will need to show in some more tangible way that ageing workers are useful and worth recruiting (e.g. using examples, calculations). The imminent labour shortage will inevitably cause a need to re-evaluate prevailing recruitment policies.

### *4.3 Is ageism finally becoming a thing of the past?*

Ageism is prohibited by law. The provisions which prohibit ageism protect the ageing and older people from age-based discrimination in recruitment and employment (IKOMI 1996). The ban against ageism has proved not to be completely watertight in practice, however. It is difficult to enforce and not everyone is even aware of it. Studies and research within the National Programme on Ageing Workers (Forsman & Liukkunen 1999, Kouvonen 1999) have shown that considerable numbers of ageing people have experienced ageism. Problems are particularly common in recruitment situations.

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<sup>3</sup> Respondents in the survey conducted by Sundström et al. considered ‘older’ (Swedish ‘äldre’) to be people of about 50. No age group had been defined, and instead definition was left to the respondents.



The training and information provision of the National Programme on Ageing Workers has raised awareness of the legislation prohibiting ageism and placed an emphasis on the prevention of ageism. The occupational safety authorities have also given closer attention than hitherto to this issue.

The working life barometer for 2000 showed that experiences of age-related discrimination in the workplace had become less common in the 45-54 age group, and especially in the 55+ age group during the programme period 1998-2000. This happy news for the ageing is, however, overshadowed by the information that young people's experiences of ageism have increased during the same period (*Kansallisen Ikäohjelman seurantaraportti 2001* (National Programme on Ageing Workers follow-up report 2001; Finnish only).

The working life barometer data for different years have not been fully comparable. The 2001 working life barometer used a format which is comparable with Statistics Finland data on working conditions. The comparison data were from 1997. According to the 2001 working life barometer, discrimination against ageing workers had been observed more often in the workplace (11%) than discrimination against young workers (7%). Observations of discrimination generally (discrimination based on gender, ethnic background and youth) had fallen compared with 1997, but observation of discrimination against ageing workers and especially people in fixed-term employment had become more common. This increase is explained by the fact that women had recorded more discrimination based on age and fixed-term employment, while men had recorded less discrimination than hitherto based on these factors (*Työolobarometri, lokakuu 2001* (Advance information on the Ministry of Labour's working life barometer, October 2001)).

It would be interesting to compare how common ageism is in Finland compared with other countries, and the changes which have occurred in the frequency of discrimination in different countries. One opportunity for comparison is provided by the Eurobarometer<sup>4</sup>, which includes data on ageism (Ilmarinen 1999, Juhani Ilmarinen's statement of December 3, 2001). The most recent results from the Eurobarometer which will make it possible to examine the change in age-related discrimination will become available in early 2002, and can then be compared with the data from 1996.

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<sup>4</sup> The Eurobarometer is produced by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Dublin, Ireland).

The survey conducted in connection with this evaluation asked respondents to assess the changes which had taken place over the past five years (see appendix 2). One of the questions dealt with discrimination against ageing people<sup>5</sup> in recruitment situations. The respondents felt almost without exception that a favourable change in this area (i.e. less discrimination) was fairly important to achieve. 46% of respondents rated it as very important.

In other words, discrimination against the over-50s in recruitment situations is generally considered to be a problem. The typical answer was that the situation had remained unchanged in relation to discrimination during the last five years (52%). One in four (26%) felt that discrimination had decreased at least a little (only 1% felt it had decreased a great deal). Almost as many (23%) felt that discrimination had become worse.

Although research has been carried out, it is difficult to form a coherent picture of the real extent of ageism and any changes therein. Discrimination usually occurs in some indirect form, and is therefore difficult to measure. Further study will be needed in order to form an overview of the entire situation. At this stage, it is impossible to report any change (in one direction or the other) in age-based discrimination. It is clear, however, that the problem still exists.

#### ***4.4 Has workplace health promotion come to the Finnish workplace to stay?***

Workplace health promotion (WHP) was not invented by the National Programme on Ageing Workers. In fact, the concept became generally known some twenty years ago, practical application becoming more common in the 1990s. The social partners had reached agreement on the necessity for WHP. A general outline for action was entered in the comprehensive incomes and economic policy settlement for 1990-1991. WHP was to be provided for the entire staff (Peltomäki et al. 1999). The committee on improving the employment potential of ageing workers (IKOMI 1996) felt that a well-focused WHP strategy could be very effective in supporting the working capacity of ageing workers. Promotion of WHP actions was consequently set down as a crucial component of the National Programme on Ageing Workers proposed by the Committee.

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<sup>5</sup> The instructions for the questionnaire used stated that 'ageing people' were those aged 50+.

Monitoring of the extent, content and results of WHP activities was also included in the programme. WHP was understood in a broad sense; according to the WHP barometer (1999), WHP is a form of cooperation between the employer, codetermination organization and employees, designed to support working capacity. Actions focus on the health, fitness, motivation and vocational skills of employees and development of the work, the working environment and the workplace community.

When the National Programme on Ageing Workers began in 1998, there was a great deal of WHP in workplaces according to the above definition. The workplaces of almost 80 per cent of employed people working in workplaces of at least two people had WHP activities at least to some extent, but in most cases it was not felt to be adequately included in the day-to-day work (*TYKY 1999* (the WHP barometer)).

Development operations seemed to be quite varied, however, and there was comprehensive coverage of the various target areas of WHP. People had faith in the positive effects of the actions and the financial benefit it would bring, and they were satisfied with the cost-benefit ratio. There was also rather widespread commitment to allocating resources to WHP in the future. Ageing was not considered a major problem in the workplace. There was at least some level of effort in most people's workplaces (61%) to help ageing workers stay in work, while there were relatively few cases where the management had received age management training (13%) (*ibid.*).

The WHP barometer is intended as a tool for measuring the effects of the National Programme on Ageing Workers. The first measurement was taken in 1998. It was repeated in 2001, but, with the exception of some preliminary data<sup>6</sup>, the results were not yet available for inclusion in the present assessment. The preliminary data suggests that compared with 1998, WHP appears to have become an even more familiar concept in the workplace, and that WHP has also become slightly more widespread. More funding than hitherto appears to have been allocated to it and faith in its economic profitability remains high. No major change appears to have taken place in efforts to help ageing workers stay on at work, but age management training has become more widespread. The National Programme on Ageing Workers appears to have had some impact in the workplace, but more detailed information on this will become available when the 2001 WHP barometer is published.

The 2001 working life barometer (Ministry of Labour, advance information) also suggests that WHP became more common during the period 1997-2001. Since

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<sup>6</sup> The barometer uses data from interviews with employers, employees and occupational health care representatives. Preliminary data was available on the results of the employer interviews.

1999, the working life barometer has included data on employees' physical and psychological working capacity in relation to the demands of work, the employee's own strength and state of health. From the point of view of the National Programme on Ageing Workers, changes in the working capacity of ageing and older people are particularly interesting. The timespan is short, however, especially as the data from 2001 could not be included in the present assessment.

According to the data for 2000, working capacity among older people was clearly down on the previous year and problems with coping had becoming more widespread (*Kansallisen Ikäohjelman seurantaraportti 2001* (National Programme on Ageing Workers follow-up report 2001; Finnish only). The changes may be explained by the fact that problems with working capacity and staying on at work will inevitably become more widespread as older people stay on in working life longer than before, despite a frail state of health. This gives pause for thought from the point of view of the National Programme on Ageing Workers. After all, the very purpose of the programme is to enable people to stay at work longer without aggravated problems with working capacity and wellbeing at work, because ageing people's special needs are supposed to be taken into account in the workplace.

On the other hand, follow-up data for the same period show that in 2000 older workers were more likely than middle-aged workers to feel that working life was changing for the better (management styles, work satisfaction, worker participation) (*Kansallisen Ikäohjelman seurantaraportti 2001* (National Programme on Ageing Workers follow-up report 2001; Finnish only). However, preliminary data from the working life barometer now seem to indicate that uncertainty is on the increase in the workplace. For the first time in ten years, employees are rating the direction of change in working life as more negative than the previous year (Ministry of Labour 2001).

In any case, the development of the relation between staying on at work and wellbeing at work will require close observation.

The experts who responded to the survey we conducted in connection with the evaluation felt that the most important subject of all was that ageing workers could be helped to stay on at work longer. About half of the respondents (46%) felt that the circumstances for ageing workers staying on at work had improved, while 28% felt they had remained unchanged and 26% felt they had deteriorated (see appendix 2).

#### 4.5 *Is adult education responding better to the needs of ageing workers?*

One specific problem which emerges for the ageing and older workforce is a deep ‘training gap’. Educational deficiencies are already fairly common among people over 45, but the problem comes to a head in the 55-64 age group; in practice this means that more than half of ageing workers have only compulsory education, and that problems involving functional reading skills and computer literacy are widespread in this group (*Kansallisen Ikäohjelman seurantaraportti 2001* (National Programme on Ageing Workers follow-up report 2001); Linnakylä & Malin 2001).

To what extent and specifically how have the ageing of the population and the aims of the National Programme on Ageing Workers been taken into account in educational policy decisions and in the development of education and training provision and support measures for adults or ageing people?

The Ministry of Education has held certain key responsibilities in the implementation of the National Programme on Ageing Workers. One of the strategic focuses of the development plan for education and research is to promote lifelong learning. The development plan defines the principle of lifelong learning in the broadest possible terms, including the promotion of active civic participation among older people, too. In fact, two even broader concepts have emerged in recent programmes on adult education: lifelong learning and ‘lifewide’ learning (*Koulutus ja tutkimus vuosina 1999-2004* (‘Training and research 1999-2004’); *Aikuiskoulutuspolitiikka 2000-luvun alkuvuosina* (‘Adult education policy in the early 2000s’).

In this respect, Finnish education and training policy is seamlessly aligned with the strategic recommendations of both the OECD and the EU. The conclusions of the Lisbon European Council confirm that “the move towards lifelong learning must accompany a successful transition to a knowledge-based economy and society”. In addition to targets focusing on economic and employment trends, the document also emphasizes the importance of active citizenship and social cohesion. The common European strategy comprises “two equally important aims for lifelong learning: promoting active citizenship and promoting employability”. In fact, the strategic aim is to build “a citizens’ Europe through lifelong learning” (*A Memorandum on Lifelong Learning*. Commission Staff Working Paper, p. 3, 5 and 7).

The ageing of the population requires continuous development of adult education, both in terms of education provision and in terms of support systems which enable

people to take part in it. Inclusion of the aims of the National Programme on Ageing Workers in adult education development plans has been a focus of the Finnish Budget for the past few years (Budget proposals 2000, 2001 and 2002).

In 2000, the Ministry of Education focused action especially on the following six areas in its implementation of the National Programme on Ageing Workers:

1. the information strategy and IT skills for the man in the street
2. development of information and advisory services in support of adult education
3. working life awareness and service-mindedness of training providers
4. competence of teaching and other staff
5. research and evaluation in support of the National Programme on Ageing Workers
6. education provision and activation of adult learners

In 2001, there were eight focus areas:

1. funding reform for vocational training for adults
2. development of management, evaluation and monitoring of adult education
3. developing the training on offer to correspond to the education needs of adults in Finland
4. IT skills for the man in the street and implementation of the information strategy
5. preventing exclusion
6. competence and skills of teaching and other staff in adult education
7. development of information and advisory services in support of adult education
8. development of financial support systems for self-motivated adult education.

Actions focused particularly on improving the education opportunities and motivation of middle-aged people. The Ministry of Education said about its operating principles that “the National Programme on Ageing Workers will be implemented in our sector with the aid of management by results and through special projects as a part of wider development programmes and projects”. The main emphasis in the Ministry’s administrative sector was on influencing attitudes and operating methods in a general sense, and the effects are seen in practice in the setting of focus areas for the Budget, and in an increase of adult education funding allocations which favour ageing and older people and people with a poor level of education. There were also extensive special projects involving supplementary training for teaching staff, including special training in the area of adult education, and the development of information and advisory services in support of adult education. A new online advisory service, *Opintoluotsi*, which will open soon, will

cover all aspects of education and training and will cater to everyone, including the middle-aged and ageing. There is also a project on IT skills for everyone which is part of the Information Strategy for Education and Research and includes the aim of helping to improve the information society skills of people covered by the Programme on Ageing Workers (*Kansallinen Ikäohjelma, Opetusministeriön toimenpiteet 1999-2000*; *Kansallinen Ikäohjelma, Opetusministeriön toimenpiteet 2000-2001* ('National Programme on Ageing Workers, actions by the Ministry of Education', 1999-2000 and 2000-2001).

It appears to be essential for the National Programme on Ageing Workers that its focus areas can be seen under the 'mainstreaming principle' in the Budget (the education sector) and as focus areas in the Ministry of Education's development plan. Although the National Programme on Ageing Workers has not given rise to any significant new budget allocations, benefits have been achieved by weighting adult education funding decisions, e.g. training procurement by employment and economic development centres and provincial State offices and funding for supplementary training of education sector staff, and through separate development programmes in compliance with the aims of the National Programme on Ageing Workers.

During the programme period, it was also made easier for adults to participate in education or training through improvements to the financial support received by unemployed people during periods of training or education (daily training allowance) and by introducing special financial support for adult education (in the form of a training guarantee, especially the III stage).

International comparisons show that the educational level of people in Finland is slightly higher than the OECD average. Finns are also active participants in adult education; more than half of the working age population take part in some form of adult education annually. This is a significantly higher figure than in the other reference countries. These excellent results are, however, overshadowed by a deep 'training gap', applying both to the general educational level of ageing workers and to their participation in adult education. The principle of lifelong learning is not fully applicable to these people (*Kansallisen ikäohjelman seurantaraportti 2001* (National Programme on Ageing Workers follow-up report 2001); Linnakylä & Malin 2001).

At the core of this problem, we find part of the 55+ age group. More than half of this group have only compulsory education. The participation rate in adult education also falls sharply with age. Closer scrutiny reveals that it is specifically ageing and elderly people with a poor educational level and precarious labour market position who are at the greatest risk of exclusion. Their potential for bettering their position with the aid of adult



education is further complicated by their lack of study skills, i.e. deficient functional literacy and poor to nonexistent computer literacy. Ageing and older unemployed people and people outside the workforce face an even worse situation.

In fact, the results of the participation study indicate that the present adult education system does not help to narrow the 'training gap', but may even serve to reinforce polarization; after all, it is the people with the highest educational level, leading positions and expert status who take the most active part in adult education. The uneven distribution of benefits is most striking in the area of companies' personnel training, but it also exists in self-motivated adult education, whether aimed at degrees or personal interests (Linnakylä & Malin 2001).

From the point of view of the National Programme on Ageing Workers, the 'hard core' of the 'training gap' or educational deprivation is the key to the problem. However, even a partial solution will require forceful action, such as effective advisory, guidance and support services and the creation of an adult education system which is able to respond to individual needs. Two special projects implemented within the National Programme on Ageing Workers with the aid of ESF funding focus on solving these issues. Provision of supplementary training for teaching staff which focuses on the needs of adult education (e.g. the TUKEVA project) also supports these aims.

It remains to be seen whether these development efforts will be able to solve the problems caused by the 'training gap'. Where the guidance services are concerned, there is some doubt about whether their current approach is in fact appropriate for the life situation of those who suffer from the 'training gap'. Results from the participation study indicate a need for personal guidance services. This is also a question of a more general social and education policy decision; at present, do we wish to develop the requirements for lifelong learning with an emphasis on the needs of the employed workforce, i.e. the 'active population', or do we wish to apply the principle of social cohesion and take the situation of people with a poor educational level into account.

One possible approach might be to let time solve the 'training gap' problem relating to the ageing population. A cynic might point out that the 'training gap' which exists today will gradually disappear as the baby-boom generation retires. What makes this situation problematic is that the structural changes in the labour market and the education system are causing a 'second wave' of ageing-related educational deficiency, i.e. an increasing need to raise the qualifications of people with secondary education toward higher education. The 'training gap' is shifting toward



the middle-aged. The deficiencies in the educational level of the population as a whole and the workforce in particular are now affecting people as young as 40.

The National Programme on Ageing Workers has the nature of an information campaign. This makes its achievements in the field of education, training and education policy difficult to assess, because adult education has long been a tradition in Finland, and issues involving ageing and older people at grassroots level are hardly new either. In recent years (perhaps for the past decade), Finland has been practising an 'age-neutral' education policy. The National Programme on Ageing Workers and various international comparisons and national participation studies have made this policy a subject of critical scrutiny. The National Programme on Ageing Workers has, to some extent, succeeded in changing the course of an 'unwieldy ship' slightly more towards the programme's own aims. People have become aware of the age issue and ageing people's educational needs, and the age-related 'training gap' has been discovered. Dealing with this gap will require forceful intervention, both in terms of the focus of general education policy and in terms of provisions for adults and ageing people; training provision and methods, and support systems specifically for ageing people must be developed so as to actively cater for the needs of the educationally disadvantaged (i.e. 'positive discrimination' in favour of the ageing).

There are many good examples in the business world and among organizations which inspire faith in positive discrimination in favour of ageing workers (e.g. Oras and Nokian Tyres, see appendix 3). In the light of these examples, it would seem that the age issue, when correctly understood, can be turned from a disadvantage into a resource, and made into an integral part of an organization's strategy for improving its competitiveness and performance. This still leaves the problem of the 'hard core', however. The position of ageing workers may be improving, but at the same time the life of ageing and older people who are unemployed or outside the labour market seems to be getting ever harder.

Respondents to the survey we conducted in connection with our evaluation of the programme felt that older<sup>7</sup> people's opportunities for education and training have improved during the last five years. 68% of respondents felt this was the case. Out of all the issues included in the questionnaire, this issue was felt to show the second biggest improvement (the biggest improvement was considered to have taken place in access to information about the age issue, see appendix 2).

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<sup>7</sup> Older people being defined as 50+.

Rather than suggesting any significant improvement in the actual educational level of older people, the response to the survey indicates the significant change which has taken place in recent years (especially in the slightly longer term) in the attitude of training providers to older people's learning potential and the general usefulness of providing training for older people from a social perspective.

#### **4.6 *Has the employment level of older workers begun to catch up with that of other age groups?***

Monitoring information collected within the National Programme on Ageing Workers indicates that there have been changes in line with the programme's aims. In 2000, the 55-59 age group was the only one whose employment rate was higher than before the recession (1989). The employment rate in general has gone up during the programme period of the National Programme on Ageing Workers (1998-2000), but the employment rate for older workers (both the 55-59 and the 60-64 age group) has gone up faster than average and is catching up with the employment rate for other age groups (see table 1).

*Table 1. Employment rate by age group in 1989-2000.*

<b>Age group</b>	<b>year 1989</b>	<b>year 1994</b>	<b>year 1998</b>	<b>year 1999</b>	<b>year 2000</b>	<b>change 98-00</b>	<b>change 89-00</b>
15-24	53%	28%	35%	39%	40%	14%	-25%
25-44	89%	74%	79%	80%	81%	3%	-10%
45-49	90%	78%	82%	82%	84%	2%	- 7%
50-54	83%	74%	77%	78%	79%	3%	- 4%
55-59	58%	49%	51%	55%	59%	16%	2%
60-64	26%	17%	20%	22%	23%	15%	-10%
15-64	74%	60%	64%	66%	67%	5%	-10%

Sources: (*Kansallisen ikäohjelman seurantaraportit 2000 ja 2001* (National Programme on Ageing Workers follow-up reports 2000 and 2001).

The improvement in the employment rate for older workers is an important result. The improvement stems chiefly from the fact that employed people are able to stay on in work longer than hitherto, rather than from older unemployed people finding it easier to find work. Ageing employed workers' faith in their chances of finding a new job is still significantly lower than in younger age groups. Older employed people's faith in finding a new job has, however, grown more than that of younger age groups (*Työolobarometri 2001* (Advance information on the Ministry of Labour's working life barometer). A survey of the service needs of the long-term

unemployed showed that older unemployed people's will to stay on in work is stronger than their faith in actually finding a new job (Rajavaara 2000).

Long-term unemployment among older people has fallen in recent years partly as a result of improved employment, but particularly because older people are now more likely than hitherto to stay on at work past the minimum age for the 'fast track' to an unemployment pension. (*Kansallisen ikäohjelman seurantaraportti 2001* (National Programme on Ageing Workers follow-up report 2001)).

Efforts have been made to improve the employment potential of the ageing by boosting the opportunities for older people to take part in active labour policy measures. The percentage of people aged 55+ in such measures has gone up, and the effectiveness of the measures has improved where older people are concerned. Although these observations are promising in themselves, progress has been slight and does not change the general picture of the gloomy employment outlook for older unemployed people.

Respondents to the survey we conducted in connection with the assessment generally considered the improvement in ageing people's employment rate to be very important. A majority (55%) felt that older people's<sup>8</sup> chances of keeping their jobs had improved in the last five years. Most of the respondents did feel, however, that older unemployed people's chances of finding work had either worsened (37%) or were unchanged (26%). One in three respondents (37%) felt that unemployed people's chances of finding work had improved (see appendix 2).

#### ***4.7 Has the retirement age gone up?***

One of the aims of the National Programme on Ageing Workers was to raise the actual retirement age, and the retirement age has, in fact, been rising throughout the programme period (see table 2). The actual age for leaving working life, which includes working life exits through the 'fast track' to an unemployment pension, went up too, and the reasons for this include people spending less time than hitherto on the 'fast track'.

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<sup>8</sup> The instructions for the questionnaire defined 'older' as people of 50+.

*Table 2. Calculated retirement age of pensioners living in Finland, 1989-2000.*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Age when retired</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Age when retired</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Age when retired</b>
1989	58.2	1993	58.1	1997	58.5
1990	58.2	1994	58.0	1998	58.8
1991	58.2	1995	58.1	1999	59.0
1992	58.2	1996	58.2	2000	59.1

Sources: (*Kansallisen ikäohjelman seurantaraportit 2000 ja 2001* (National Programme on Ageing Workers follow-up reports 2000 and 2001).

Although the average retirement age is rising, the threat to the economy and the labour supply caused by a low retirement age is not estimated to have decreased in any significant way. Only one in four respondents to the survey of experts we conducted felt that the last five years had seen an improvement (i.e. that the threat had become less imminent). Slightly more people (30%) said the situation was unchanged or had deteriorated (see appendix 2).

Respondents were asked to suggest ways of encouraging people to stay on at work longer than at present. Work to influence people's attitudes, development of management methods and the organization of work, economic incentives and flexible working time solutions (including part-time pensions) were the most common suggestions (see appendix 1).

#### ***4.8 Have flexible working time arrangements become more common?***

The aims of the National Programme on Ageing Workers include encouraging the use of part-time pensions, job-alternation leave and part-time supplements among ageing workers.

In 1997, there were about 7,000 recipients of a part-time pension. In 1998, the age limit for a part-time pension was experimentally reduced by two years to 56. There was a subsequent rapid rise in the number of recipients, reaching 25,000 in 2000 (*Kansallisen ikäohjelman seurantaraportti 2001* (National Programme on Ageing Workers follow-up report 2001)).

In November 2001, the social partners reached an agreement concerning the development of employment pensions in the private sector, and it was also agreed

at this time that the age limit for part-time pension should be adjusted back to its original level at 58 as of the beginning of 2003 and that, unlike the situation at present, less pension should accrue from a period on part-time pension.

Job alternation leave has also been gaining popularity. Between 1996 and 1999, 30,000 wage-earners took job-alternation leave. 70% of them were women, and the average age was 43. Experiences of job-alternation leave have been generally positive, although the main problem is considered to be the drop in income (Härmä 2000). The part-time supplement was introduced in 1994, and by the end of 1999, a total of about 50,000 people had worked in part-time work supported by the part-time supplement. This model was mainly used by women employees in the municipal sector.

The present course of pension policy is to cut down the number of exit routes from working life (Lehto 2001). The issue of flexible working time and pension arrangements is always topical, however. A majority of respondents to a survey conducted by Juuti (2001) said pension policy should be flexible and provide individual alternatives, and that ageing workers should have flexible options for working shorter days if they so wished. A majority were in favour of part-time pension solutions. How to achieve a balance between work and other areas of life is a key issue for workplace development (Sundström et al. 2001).

The respondents to our survey felt it was fairly important to help older workers combine their work and other areas of life in a flexible way. Almost half of the respondents (48%) felt there had already been a change for the better. One in ten felt the situation had worsened over the past five years. The remainder (42%) detected no change at all (see appendix 2).

## ***5. Summary of the programme's results***

The following table presents a summary of the results of the National Programme on Ageing Workers. In interpreting these results, it should be remembered that there were many other factors in the environment of the programme which had similar effects. It is therefore extremely difficult to isolate the specific impact of the programme. In many cases, it is a question of the programme speeding up processes which were already in progress anyway. Where the issue of age is concerned, even 'putting it on the agenda' is a notable achievement in itself.

*Table 3. Summary of the results of the National Programme on Ageing Workers in its different target areas*

Grades: - = a change for the worse, 0 = no change, + = a slight change for the better, ++ = a clear change for the better, +++ = a very considerable change for the better, ? = hard to tell

Target area	Grade	Observations on the contribution of the programme
Increased volumes and improved access to information on ageing in general and ageing workers in particular	++	A great deal of information has been disseminated in many different forms, with an emphasis on research results. The message has been well received. The programme's impact here is indisputable.
Attitudes to ageing workers	+	An attitude change for the better is discernible, but it is difficult to tell how much the programme and its activities (communications, training, research and development) have actually contributed to this.
Ageism in working life	+ (?)	The problem of ageism has been highlighted and an effort made to prevent such discrimination. It is difficult to tell just how the situation has changed, and more information is needed.
WHP activities	++ (?)	WHP is firmly established in the workplace. It has expanded and become slightly more varied. Age management is becoming more common. The programme has influenced these matters to some extent. More information is needed on the overall picture of trends in the working capacity and wellbeing of older workers.
Lifelong learning	++ (?)	There is now more education and training provision for older people and it has become more varied. These improvements are not necessarily a direct consequence of the

		programme, although it has given the age issue more exposure. The educational level and training participation level of older people remains low.
Older people's chances of finding new work	0 (+)	There are indications that the situation may be beginning to improve. The percentage of older people in active labour policy measures is rising. There is, however, still an enormous difference compared with young people's chances of finding work.
Employment rate	++	A clear change for the better. Older workers are staying on at work longer. It is difficult to distinguish between the impact of the programme and other factors (the general economic climate, lack of skilled labour).
Retirement age	++	The average age for leaving work has been steadily rising. This is crucial in order to control pension expenditure and ensure an adequate supply of labour. It is difficult to demonstrate a direct impact by the programme. The consensus on the need to encourage people to stay in work longer, to which the programme has contributed, has been important.
Part-time pensions, flexible working time models	+	Their popularity is growing. Flexible pension and working time solutions were not a very central part of the programme, although it did conduct research and studies in this area. The issue of the balance between a 'working society' and a 'civic society' was not really brought up, although it is a tangible and topical issue for ageing workers.
Legislative changes	+	Legislative changes helped integrate ageing-related issues into operations in the various sectors.

Cooperation, networking	++	Cooperation worked rather well between the different ministries, experts and social partners. International assessment found this cooperation and the development input of Finland's occupational health care services to be among Finland's strengths.
Learning	++	The research carried out within the programme was extensive and of high standard. There is thus a great deal of research results, and the crucial point now is to make them easily available/accessible. The portal being prepared by the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health will help here. Training provision has been fairly extensive. A network and feedback mechanisms were created for training projects. Good practices can be found in the development projects. International learning highlighted more than usual (cf. Peer Review). The programme also has its own follow-up and assessment mechanism.

## 6. *General assessment and recommendations*

### 6.1 *General assessment*

We found no justification for giving an unconditional “No” in answer to the questions used as sub-headings in section 4 of this report. The questions are based on the aims of the National Programme on Ageing Workers, and our answer was either “Yes”, “Yes, at least to some extent” or “Yes, but...”. The grading of table 3 gives a summarized view, showing that in almost all the focus areas of the programme there had been at least a small improvement.

The assessment is based on identification of changes in line with the programme's objectives, where the programme has contributed to bringing about those changes. A change for the better does not necessarily mean that everything is now fine from



the point of view of ageing people themselves (Juuti 2001; observations by the evaluation team of Social Development Co Ltd). Understandably, the message of the National Programme on Ageing Workers, focusing as it does on the strengths of ageing and older people and the opportunities opened up by WHP and age management, has been well received by older people themselves. In cases where public reprimands aimed at older people planning an early escape from the labour market have been linked with the programme, this has been much less welcome.

It would be an exaggeration to say that the Finnish people have clasped the Programme on Ageing Workers to their bosom. It is, however, true that most people have at least heard of the programme and that rather a lot of people have first-hand experience of it (i.e. they have received information produced by the programme or taken part in actions or projects). But is the group of people who feel the programme's aims are important for them, personally, and who are ready to work for it, large enough to secure a future for the processes initiated by the programme? This group may not be large enough to further the programme through sheer mass alone, but it may be large enough to initiate and encourage dialogue and interaction, mutual learning forums and operating networks which can help introduce and establish practices that promote wellbeing at work and staying on at work both in the workplace and wherever else they may be needed.

The National Programme on Ageing Workers has not produced breakthroughs or cultural shifts, but it is hardly realistic to expect that from a programme with only a five-year programme period. Our overall evaluation of the National Programme on Ageing Workers (1998-2002) is favourable:

- The programme has been appropriate and useful in Finland's situation
- Good results have been achieved
- The programme was sufficiently innovative
- It has created incentives for future operations in the area

## ***6.2 Aims and future of the programme***

Despite the interaction between the programme and other factors, it has not been possible to eliminate the problems related to or affecting older workers that were the focus of the programme over the past five years (early exit from the labour market, low employment rate, unemployed people's poor outlook for finding new work, shortcomings in working capacity and competence, general prejudice and negative attitudes, even discrimination). Expectations that the programme would help establish WHP in the workplace, make adult education correspond better to

ageing people's needs and improve the general attitude to ageing people in recognition of their actual strengths have failed to materialize as such, although some progress has been made in all these areas.

The aims of the programme continue to be valid and there continues to be a need for action toward those aims. Almost all the respondents to the survey we conducted in connection with this assessment felt that continued support for ageing workers in keeping their jobs and staying on at work was at least 'quite important', with two in three respondents feeling it was 'very important' (see appendix 1).

It is partly a question of continuing and expanding within the operating framework left behind by the programme actions which have already been started. As a consequence of the main thrust of the Government's economic policy, the themes of the programme will remain on the agenda of different policy sectors. The Government seeks to raise the employment rate close to 70 per cent<sup>9</sup> and the average age for exiting the labour market 2-3 years closer to the official retirement age. In order to reach the target employment rate, the employment rate of older workers will have to be further raised. Raising the employment rate of older workers is also a major goal of the European Employment Strategy (See Finland's National Action Plan for Employment in accordance with the EU's Employment Guidelines).

There does not appear to be any motivation or need to continue the programme in the form of an extensive information campaign. The programme has reached a stage where it has collected good examples and gathered critical mass. This is a good base from which to move on to more focused interventions with a solid resource base and also for expanding the contacts of the programme (see appendix 6, which demonstrates the progress made in furthering the aims of the programme). Actions related to the programme's aims will continue to be implemented in future within the framework of established organizations and within the other workplace development programmes. Appendix 5 gives examples of the similarities between some of these different programmes. There are also other programmes and projects which could be linked with them. As far as we can see, the most recommendable approach to future action would be to create shared learning structures and forums for the different programmes and projects, rather than necessarily setting up a new programme.

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<sup>9</sup> The employment rate has been rising since the mid-1990s and stood at 67% in 2000 (Työpoliittinen Aikakauskirja 4/2001).

## 7. Conclusion

The National Programme on Ageing Workers and its themes can also usefully be examined from the viewpoint of a more extensive frame linked with social changes, i.e. ‘cultural shift or ‘paradigm shift’.

It is clear that the programme was merely an introduction to an issue that will require changes in workplace operating procedures and management practices that will be slow in coming. The same applies to changes in individual people’s lifestyles. This makes it important to follow through and reinforce the main themes and implementation mechanisms of the programme as the programme period comes to an end. There is still much room for improvement of the cooperation between different institutions, development on the operative level and development of distribution mechanisms. There are also grounds for gradually expanding the themes of the programme’s development projects so that they cover more of people’s lifespans, activity during the different stages of people’s lives — and transitional stages in particular — and interaction between the civic society and working society. The Programme’s positive message, its positive and flexible methods for helping people stay on at work as long as possible, should also be reinforced.

The social change which is in progress at present has been interpreted and conceptualized in different ways. It has been called post-industrial, postmodern, information society and the second modern age. The outlines of the second modern age are still unclear and observations, questions and concepts concerning it are still in a state of flux. Despite this, we should begin to consider the ageing-related challenges to workplace development which will inevitably be a part of this second modern age.

According to Beck (2000), the first modern age that we are now leaving was characterized by the strong role of the nation state, corporatism, collective life styles, comprehensive welfare states, clear boundaries between sectors and professions and fairly good predictability. The second modern age which is (possibly) emerging is characterized by the breakdown of this close-knit institutional structure, a loss of controlling power by the nation state in favour of global and local/regional developments, increasingly obscure boundaries, difficulties in predicting developments and general ambivalence.

Uncertainty and unpredictability are strongly present when age-related social solutions are discussed (Drucker 2001; Lehto 2001). The second modern age involves workplace and labour market changes that will tend to favour skills,

specifically possessed by more experienced workers, such as problem-solving skills, the ability to see the whole picture and home in on what is essential, and a high level of tacit knowledge. Drucker (2001) predicts that people will stay on longer in working life, but not in the same way as before. He feels that older workers in particular will take part in working life in new and different ways.

It is safe to assume that the transition toward the second modern age will involve many interesting changes from the point of view of age-related workplace problems, in both terms of work itself, the labour market and people's lives. Tables describing these changes are included as an appendix (Appendix 4). When the major structuring and unifying framework concepts of the first modern age, such as mass production, give way to 'individually constructed life projects', i.e. action and activity by individuals, this will also affect older people, and perhaps particularly older people.

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# Appendices

## Appendix 1

*Importance and focus of development measures according to survey respondents (Social Development Co Ltd survey of experts 2001)*

<b>How important do you consider development measures which support ageing people in keeping their jobs and staying on at work?</b>	
Not important, no special measures needed	1%
Fairly important, development measures are needed	35%
Very important, a strong emphasis on development measures is necessary	64%
n= 172	100%

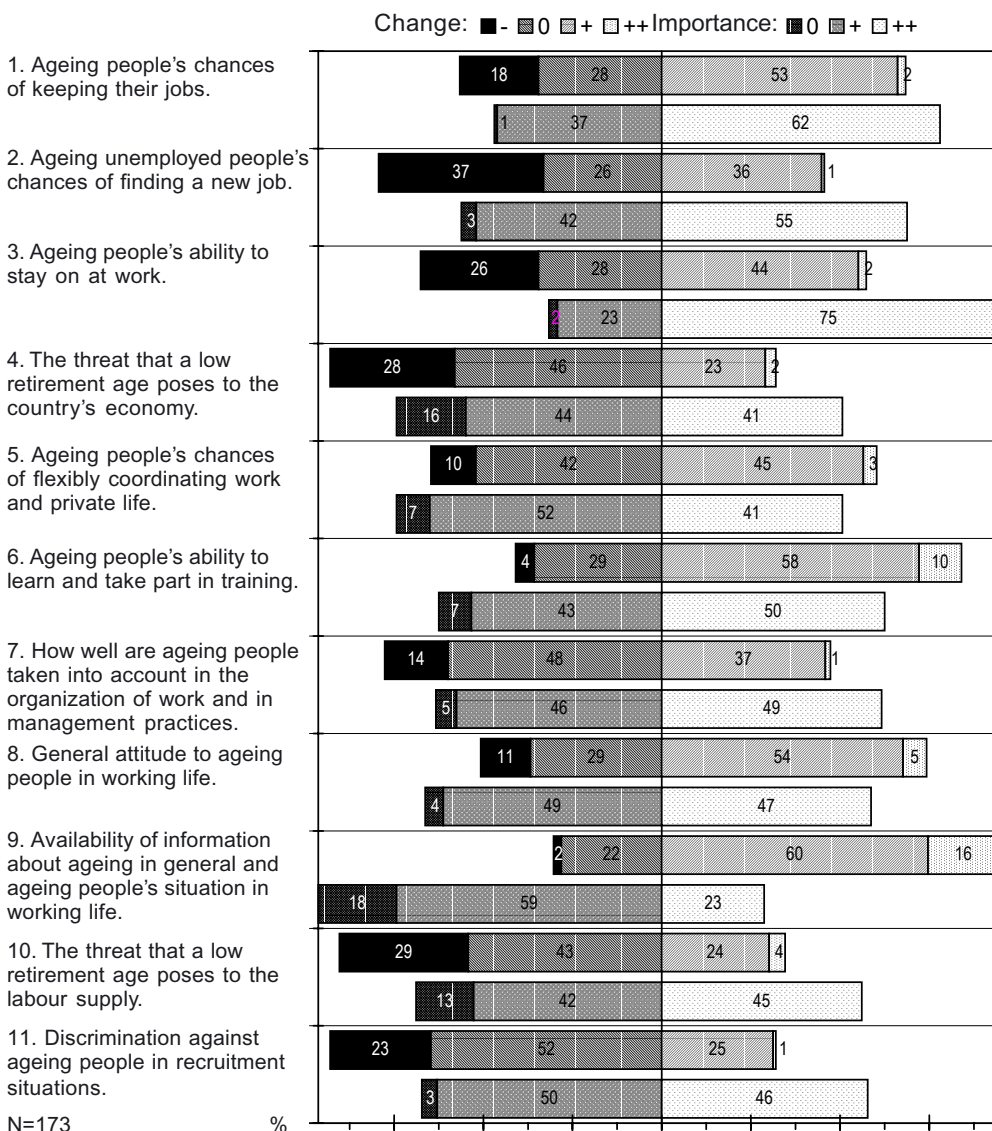
  

<b>What would be an incentive for people to stay on at work longer than they do at present?</b>	
Most important incentive:	mentions, no. of:
Appreciation of skill, attitudes, an emphasis on professionalism, a supportive work community, age management	35
A lighter workload, reduced pressure of time, work reorganization	29
Financial benefits, incentive pay	24
Flexitime	22
Motivation for work, job satisfaction	10
Support in coping	6
Help in maintaining skills	5
Removal of the 'fast track' to early retirement, benefit cuts	4
Support for employers, distribution of disability pension costs across all employers during the employee's career	3
WHP activities	2
A pleasant workplace, relation to co-workers	2
A focus on health	1
The quality of working life	1
Taking the special situation of ageing people into account	1
Part-time pensions to be available only to those who really need them	1
A stop to public debate about the stressfulness of working life	1
Good training	1
Early intervention in the form of rehabilitation	1
An improved system for re-training	1

## Appendix 2

### *Change in the last five years (upper bar) and perceived importance of issue (lower bar)*

Change: - = change for the worse, 0 = no change, + = some change, ++ = considerable change for the better. Importance of achieving improvement: 0 = not very important, + = fairly important, ++ = very important.



Source: Social Development Co Ltd survey of experts 2001

The figures on the bars are percentages.



### **Case study: Nokian Tyres Plc**

The aims of the National Programme on Ageing Workers are transmitted to the field of education policy largely in the form of the principle of lifelong learning. Another perspective for shedding additional light on the issue would be to study ‘frontline organizations’. What has been achieved in the workplace, for instance?

Nokian Tyres is an example of how the aims of the National Programme on Ageing Workers can be promoted on a corporate or workplace level without doing it in the name of the actual programme itself or linking it to the age issue as such. Nokian Tyres has approached the issues by developing its organization (successfully introducing a team-based structure), providing comprehensive occupational health care and WHP activities alongside personnel training. The company’s personnel report says that the company strives to find *“Competitive advantages in lifelong learning and good work ability. In the tyre business, too, skills are emerging as a crucial competition factor. Nokian Tyres is expanding and renewing its expertise... with the aid of the Lifelong learning programme. Development of teamwork organization and a raised education level among the personnel will also boost our competitiveness.”*<sup>10</sup>

The aim of the Lifelong learning programme at Nokian Tyres is to bring studies and learning as close as possible to people’s everyday work and help develop it, and to involve as many employees as possible — ideally the entire staff — in learning activities. A comprehensive skills development organization has been set up within the company ( the ‘tyre institute’ and development teams, along with masters, tutors, instructors and study counsellors). The development needs of the organization and its personnel are being systematically studied, and the entire staff will receive personal study plans. Part of the training will be arranged in the workplace based on everyday work situations and work rotation, while some of the training modules will be bought from outside suppliers. Financial support and working time arrangements will be extended to employees who wish to take training on their own initiative.

The results at Nokian Tyres show that the right support measures and well-organized goal-oriented operations can activate a majority of employees to participate in adult education. According to the personnel report, a personal study

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<sup>10</sup> Kuinka hyvin pohjoiset olot opettavatkaan! Nokian Renkaat Oyj:n henkilöstöraportti 1999, s. 15  
(‘Northern conditions help you learn fast’, Nokian Tyres personnel report 1999).

plan was drawn up for 500 people in 1999, while 995 people took part in training or other forms of development activity. At this time, the company employed a total of 1,311 people.<sup>11</sup>

Superficially, this all appears to be ‘age-neutral’ action toward implementing the company’s business strategy, with improved business performance as its ultimate goal. However, a deeper analysis reveals that the age of employees is included as a dimension both in work organization and WHP activities, and also in lifelong learning activities. In support of other development actions, the company has set up an age management programme which focuses specifically on personnel age issues.

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<sup>11</sup> The Lifelong learning programme at Nokian Tyres was started and its support system created as a project supported by the National Programme on Ageing Workers (TYKE stage I project).

## Features of the 'second modern' era

### Changes in work and the labour market

Work and labour market	
<i>Before and now (‘first modern’)</i>	<i>Now and in the future (‘second modern’)</i>
Clear boundaries and relatively slow, ‘major’ changes, relatively good predictability	Crossing boundaries, rapid change, unpredictability and great uncertainty
Rationalized (factory-based) work and clearly separated jobs and tasks, clearly divided labour market	Knowledge work and manipulation of symbols, network and matrix structures, boundary crossing, mobile and transitional labour market
Primarily national labour market market (‘glocalization’)	Increasingly global and regional labour
Work: Full-time work Skills: Narrow specialization	Work: Flexible, individual work solutions Skills: Flexible specialization, multiskilling, constant development
Employment target: Full employment in full-time work	Employment target: Maximum employment using flexible and individual solutions (including active transitional solutions)
Work organizations, corporate culture and management: clear and steep hierarchies, ‘from the top down’ management styles, detailed instructions, “low or middling trust”	Work organizations, corporate culture and management: low hierarchies, delegation, strategic dialogue, “very high level of trust”

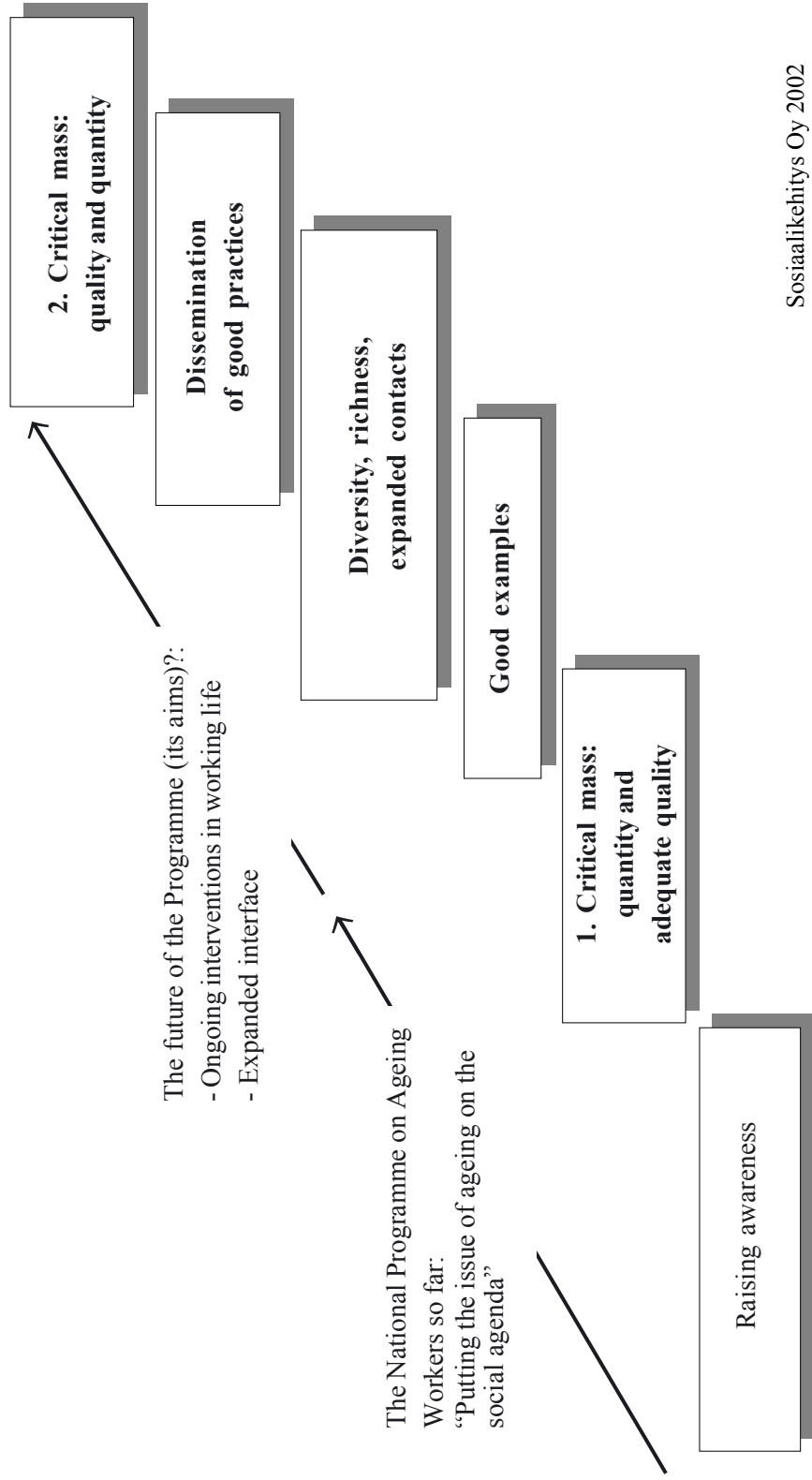
## Changes in life patterns and working careers

Life patterns and working careers	
<i>Before and now (‘first modern’)</i>	<i>Now and in the future (‘second modern’)</i>
Great masses of people have the same, reasonably stable and clearly differentiated life patterns and working careers	Life patterns and working careers are increasingly individual, non-linear and changeable
First basic education, then specialization, then work	Recurrent and continuous training
Reliance on ‘great traditions’, occupational identity, class, social status, nuclear family	Approaching own life as personal project, increasing divergence of social positions and lifestyles, different types of family structure

### *Support for workplace development in Finland*

<b>National Programme on Ageing Workers</b>	<b>Well-Being at Work Programme</b>	<b>National Productivity Programme</b>	<b>Workplace Development Programme</b>	<b>European Social Fund</b>	<b>The Finnish Work Environment Fund</b>
1998 - 2002	2000 - 2003	1993 - 2003	1996 - 2003	2000 - 2006	
Helping ageing workers stay on at work, look for work, find work, avoid early retirement	To promote the work ability and wellbeing at work of the Finnish workforce and help people stay in the labour market for longer	To use information and new methods to make changes in work and operating procedures which promote the well-being and productivity of staff	To promote the effectiveness of work and the quality of working life through workplace development	To promote employment and lifelong learning, to develop active labour policy as a way of combating unemployment and to prevent social exclusion	To improve the work environment, working life and productivity by funding research, development and dissemination of information
Development of legislation, research, training and dissemination of information on good practices	Providing information and promoting good practices, utilising research results, support for development projects, development of legislation	Projects focusing on research and methods, information provision, dissemination of best practices	Development projects and expert support, disseminating information and expertise on workplace development, intensifying cooperation	Identifying, testing and producing new approaches to the national policies on labour, education and economics, and helping disseminate good practices	Research and development projects, publication and dissemination of new information, grants
The employed and the unemployed	Companies, public bodies and organizations	Research institutes, educational institutions, labour market organizations	Companies, public bodies and other organizations	The unemployed, the employed, entrepreneurs, students	Companies, municipalities, research institutions, individual people

*The future of the Programme? Ohjelman tulevaisuus?*

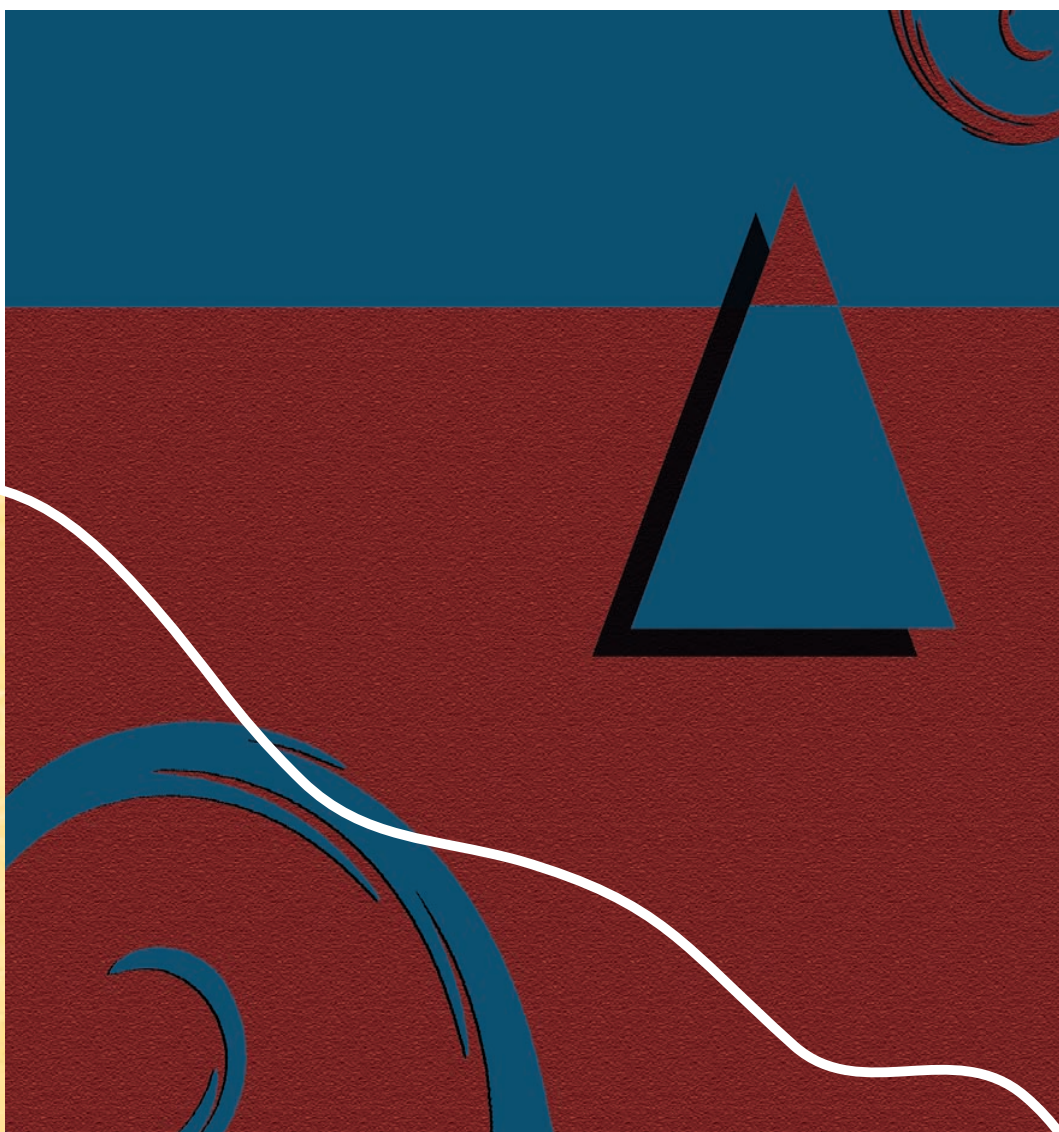




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Ministry of Social Affairs and Health  
P.O. Box 33, FIN-00023 Government, Finland  
Meritullinkatu 8, Helsinki  
Tel. +358 9 160 74420

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